

From the Upper Chamber



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Report for Wednesday, February 20, 2008

The twentieth day of the 2008 legislative session was called to order by Lieutenant Governor **Casey Cagle**.

Senator **Don Balfour** of the 9th stated that the journal had been read and was found to be correct.

Sen. **Steve Thompson** of the 33rd moved to reconsider Senate Bill 361, the *Georgia Credit Protection Act*, which adds new protection for Georgia consumers from identity and credit theft.

Sen. **Chip Rogers** of the 21st took the well to urge the Senate to object to the reconsideration of SB 361.

Sen. **Thompson** of the 33rd took the well to speak to his motion to reconsider.

SB 361 failed to be reconsidered by a vote of 24 to 31.

SB 479-489, Senate Resolutions 970 and 980, and House Bills 492, 839, 960, 1044, 1054, 1137, 1182 and 1185 were read for the first time and assigned to committees. The clerk then read the reports of standing committees and second readers.

After the morning roll call, Sen. **Seth Harp** of the 29th led the Senate in the Pledge of Allegiance. He then introduced the *Chaplain of the Day*, Pastor **Mike Ricker** of Wynnton United Methodist Church in Columbus, who led the Senate in the daily devotional.

Sen. **Mitch Seabaugh** of the 28th moved that SB 491 be read for the first time and assigned to the Senate Retirement Committee. There was no objection.

Sen. **Ross Tolleson** of the 20th rose on a Point of Personal Privilege to discuss SB 443, which changes certain provisions relating to rules and regulations of the Board of Natural Resources, used to establish game and fish criminal violations.

Sen. **Vincent Fort** of the 39th took the well on a Point of Personal Privilege to express his dissatisfaction with the legislative process in the Senate Education and Youth Committee.

Sen. **Bill Cowsert** of the 46th took the rostrum to introduce the *Doctor of the Day*, Dr. **Jonathan Mitchell Cook** of Athens.

Sen. **Harp** took the well to acknowledge members of the Georgia Pharmacy Association, seated in the Senate gallery.

Sen. **Seabaugh** took the well to explain the background of SB 491.

Sen. **Greg Goggans** of the 7th took the well to announce that a hearing concerning Care Management Organization health plans would take place today.

The Resolution Calendar, consisting of SR 966-969, 971-979 and 982-988, was unanimously adopted.

The clerk read SR 822, which recognizes Georgia's northern border with Tennessee and North Carolina as the 35th parallel.

Sen. **David Shafer** of the 48th took the well to present the bill. He yielded to questions from Senators **John Douglas** of the 17th, **Jeff Mullis** of the 53rd, **George Hooks** of the 14th and **Thompson** of the 33rd.

SR 822 was adopted by a vote of 52 to 0.

Sen. **Hooks** took the rostrum to recognize Congressman **Sanford Bishop, Jr.** in the Senate chamber.

Sen. **Mullis** took the rostrum to recognize a leadership class from Catoosa County, seated in the Senate gallery.

The clerk read SB 434, which renames the Department of Technical and Adult Education and establishes the Technical College System of Georgia.

Sen. **Harp** took the well to present the bill.

SB 434 passed by a vote of 53 to 0.

The clerk read HB 926, which brings Georgia tax code in step with the Internal Revenue Code.

Sen. **Chip Rogers** of the 21st took the well to present the Floor Substitute.

The Floor Substitute to HB 926 was unanimously adopted.

President Pro Tempore **Eric Johnson** of the 1st asked that HB 926 be moved to the foot of the calendar. There was no objection.

The clerk read SR 845, which calls for a Constitutional Amendment authorizing county governments to propose a one percent sales tax to fund the construction of transportation projects.

Sen. **Jeff Mullis** of the 53rd took the well to the present the resolution.

The clerk read Amendment 1, which modifies language regarding the allocation of funds collected from the one percent sales tax.

Sen. **Mullis** took the well to address the amendment. He yielded to questions from Sens. **Fort** and **Thompson** of the 33rd.

The clerk read Amendment 2, which modifies the language concerning the divisions of special districts.

Sen. **Doug Stoner** of the 6th took the well to explain the amendment. He yielded to questions from Sen. **Fort**

Amendment 1 was unanimously adopted.

Amendment 2 was unanimously adopted.

The Committee Substitute to SR 845 was adopted unanimously as amended.

SR 845 was adopted by substitute by a vote of 51 to 4.

SR 969, which congratulates the Columbus High School girls' volleyball team on winning the Georgia AAA Volleyball Championship, was read and adopted.

Sen. **Ed Harbison** of the 15th took the rostrum to speak to the resolution and recognize the team members seated in the Senate gallery.

The clerk read SB 345, which creates the Interstate Commission on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

Sen. **Harbison** took the well to present the bill.

SB 345 passed by a vote of 49 to 0.

The Senate stood at ease for an hour for lunch, and returned at 1:00 p.m.

Majority Leader **Tommie Williams** of the 19th took the gavel to preside over the Senate.

The clerk read SB 374, which makes improvements to lien laws in Georgia.

Sen. **Seabaugh** asked that SB 374 be moved to the foot of the calendar. There was no objection.

The clerk read SB 418, the *Georgia Fire Safety Standard and Firefighter Protection Act*, which would require that all cigarettes sold in Georgia be fitted with “stops” that would extinguish lit cigarettes that are no longer being smoked.

Sen. **Cowsert** took the well to present the bill.

The Committee Substitute to SB 418 was unanimously adopted.

SB 418 passed by a vote of 44 to 1.

The clerk read SB 443, which changes the effective date of regulations regarding fish and game violations. In addition, the bill exempts water buffalo from the wild animal license requirement.

Sen. **Bill Heath** of the 31st took the well to explain the bill.

The Committee Substitute to SB 443 was unanimously adopted.

SB 443 passed by a vote of 45 to 0.

The clerk read SB 444, which allows the Department of Transportation (DOT) to more readily dispose of surplus property.

Sen. **Chip Pearson** of the 51st took the well to present the bill. He yielded to questions from Sens. **Thompson** of the 33rd, **Tolleson**, **Jack Hill** of the 4th, **Preston Smith** of the 52nd.

Sen. **Pearson** moved that SB 444 be placed at the foot of the calendar. There was no objection.

The clerk read SB 341, which seeks to address Georgia’s expanding, aging population by assigning additional duties to the Council on Aging.

Sen. **Lee Hawkins** of the 49th took the well to present the bill.

SB 341 passed by a vote of 47 to 0.

Sen. **Rogers** took the well to speak to the Floor Substitute to HB 926, which adds language from the economic stimulus package passed by Congress last week.

The Floor Substitute to HB 926 was unanimously adopted.

Action on HB 926 was suspended pursuant to rule 7-1-6(b). The bill now returns to the Senate Rules Committee.

The clerk then read SB 374 and Amendment 1.

Sen. **Dan Weber** of the 40th took the well to speak to his amendment, which stipulates that notice of a lien must be sent to the owner no later than two business days after the lien is filed. He yielded to questions from Sen. **Tolleson**.

Sen. **John Wiles** of the 37th took the well to speak in support of the bill.

Amendment 1 was adopted by a unanimous vote.

The Committee Substitute to SB 374 was adopted unanimously as amended.

SB 374 passed by substitute by a vote of 46 to 1.

The clerk again read SB 444.

Sen. **Pearson** took the well to speak to Amendment 1, which ensures that the DOT must go through the notification process regardless of how long the surplus property has been owned.

Amendment 1 was unanimously adopted.

SB 444 passed as amended by a vote of 43 to 2.

Following the morning announcements, Sen. **Johnson** of the 1st moved that the Senate stand adjourned until 10:00 a.m., Thursday, February 21.

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